



*COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA*  
*Office of the Governor*

Robert F. McDonnell  
Governor

August 13, 2012

To High School Teachers Across the Commonwealth:

I am writing to ask for your help to give your students a head start in one of the fastest growing industries: cyber security. I am hosting the first annual Governor's Cyber Challenge this fall and I am inviting your students to participate in this initiative.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education is an important piece to the Commonwealth's, our nation's, and our students' futures. Events such as this one will help to engage students and introduce them to the much-needed technology skills that so many careers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will require.

This competition will help the nation fill a critical skills gap in cyber security. I invite your students who have an interest in computers, information technology, and cyber security to compete in the upcoming competition. Below you will find more information about the Governor's Cyber Challenge. If you have any questions, please contact Cameron Kilberg, Assistant Secretary of Technology at [Cameron.Kilberg@governor.virginia.gov](mailto:Cameron.Kilberg@governor.virginia.gov) or 804-786-0226.

We hope you and your students will participate in this exciting event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert F. McDonnell".

Robert F. McDonnell

## **The Governor's Cyber Challenge**

**Eligibility:** All students enrolled in a public or private high school (and including homeschooled students) in the Commonwealth of Virginia, in the fall of 2012.

**The Competition:** The Governor's Cyber Challenge consists of two parts. The first part is a set of online quizzes. The top 40 scoring students will advance to the second part, which are the finals on March 2, 2013, at George Mason University. Winners of the competition will receive scholarships in the amounts of \$5,000 for First Place, \$3,000 for Second Place, and \$1,500 for Third Place.

### **How Do You Play?**

#### **Step One: Register.**

A teacher, principal or school staff member must act as a school coordinator. This coordinator collaborates with the Cyber Challenge organization as needed, and distributes the online access codes to the students.

Below you will find the different steps for the registration process:

1. The coordinator establishes a personal account on the Cyber Foundations website:  
<https://www.cyberfoundations.org/>.
2. The coordinator registers their school. There is no registration fee.
3. The coordinator will receive the access codes the students will need to register with.
4. Students then may proceed by registering personal accounts using the access codes.

#### **Step Two: Have students use the online tutorial to prepare for the three set of quizzes and complete all three.**

The quizzes, located on the Cyber Foundations website, are focused on computer networking, operating systems, and system administration. The students will be able to study these materials in preparation for each competitive quiz.

Students who rank highest on these sets of quizzes will get a formal invitation to participate in the finals of the Governor's Cyber Challenge at George Mason University on March 2, 2013, which will feature an interactive, face-to-face NetWars tournament.

#### **Step Three: Have the finalist participate in NetWars at George Mason University on March 2, 2013.**

NetWars is designed for people who have a set of cyber skills; therefore, the top quiz scorers will have the skills needed to engage the program. For more information on NetWars, please see below.

## **Important Dates:**

Aug 1, 2012(Wednesday) - Registration Opens, 8am Eastern Time  
Oct 15, 2012 (Monday) - Registration deadline  
Oct 20, 2012 (Saturday) - Module 1 (Networking) tutorials open  
Oct 30, 2012 (Tuesday) - Student registration entry code deadline  
Nov 2, 2012 (Friday) - Module 1 Competition  
Nov 3, 2012 (Saturday) - Module 2 (Operating Systems) tutorials open  
Nov 16, 2012 (Friday) - Module 2 Competition  
Nov 17, 2012 (Saturday) - Module 3 (System Administration) tutorials open  
Dec 7, 2012 (Friday) - Module 3 Competition  
Dec 31, 2012 (Monday) - Access to content expires  
March 2, 2013 (Saturday) – Finals at George Mason University

## **Information on the Quiz and NetWars applications:**

### **Cyber Foundations**

Cyber Foundations is the entry-level competition in a series of increasingly challenging contests launched by the U.S. Cyber Challenge (USCC, <https://www.nbise.org/uscc>), in cooperation with leaders of the NSA, the FBI, and the Department of Homeland Security. USCC was chartered to identify and nurture talented Americans who can become the future cyber guardians and cyber warriors for United States companies, government agencies, and military services.

More information can be found at: <https://www.cyberfoundations.org/>

### **NetWars**

NetWars is a hands-on, interactive learning environment with a focus on skills information security professionals use in their jobs every day. The Air Force relies on NetWars for its intermediate network warfare-training program and military officers cannot graduate from the training program without high-level mastery of NetWars. NetWars covers topics such as system hardening, packet analysis, digital forensics, vulnerability assessment, and much more. But NetWars also has basic levels that enable young people to demonstrate they have the aptitude to excel and also gives them a fascinating real-world environment to demonstrate their skills.

More information can be found at: <http://www.sans.org/cyber-ranges/netwars>

**Questions regarding the Governor's Cyber Challenge should be directed to Cameron Kilberg, Assistant Secretary and Senior Policy Advisor, Office of Virginia's Secretary of Technology, 804-786-0226, [Cameron.Kilberg@governor.virginia.gov](mailto:Cameron.Kilberg@governor.virginia.gov).**